

SATURDAY June 27, 2015

DRILLSHIP PACIFIC MISTRAL STARTS OPERATIONS IN ARUBA





Drillship Pacific Mistral Starts Operations in Aruba

MarineTraffic.com

LAST Thursday, the Directorate of Shipping Aruba and Harbor Master, has informed Minister Otmar Oduber that another grand project is underway for Aruba.

The Pacific Mistral, a modern and fairly new drillship, commenced operations in Brazil on February 6, 2012 for a three-year term for Brazilian oil giant Petrobras. The contract has since ended; cause it to station in the Caribbean Sea upon further instructions.

The Pacific Mistral can operate in water with depths of up to 12,000 ft, and can drill wells of up to 35,000 ft. The rig features technologically advanced equipment that allows customers to improve drilling efficiency, including offline handling capabilities.

Shipping Aruba and Harbor Master, together with Dammers Group Curacao, approached Pacific Drilling of Houston Texas, the owners of Pacific Mistral; to explore the possibility of them stationing their ship in Aruba.

Yesterday, the board of Directors at Shipping Aruba, along with Harbor Master, convinced Pacific Drilling to station the Pacific Mistral in Aruba for a year.

This would mean approximately US \$100,000 in anchor funds. The ship will have about 15 to 20 crew members onboard. The Pacific Mistral could generate between US \$230,000 to US \$345,000 in revenue for Aruba through hotels, car rentals, taxis, food, and port expenditures.

Directorate of Shipping Aruba and Dammers Group Curacao are also negotiating with Pacific Drilling for a second drillship, the Pacific Meltem; to be stationed in Aruba. This would mean a possibility of generating approximately another US \$1000, 000 in revenue for the island.

Minister Otmar Oduber is content with the constructive changes that are taking place amongst the Directorate of Shipping Aruba. The vision to create an economic pillar within the maritime sector is proving to be more feasible and promising. Pacific Mistral will officially be anchored in the waters of Aruba on Saturday.

SPECIFICATIONS OF PACIFIC MISTRAL

- Samsung 10000 design capable of operations in 12,000 ft of water
- Equipped for 35,000 feet drilling depth
- Maximum 37,500 feet drilling depth
- 200-man accommodation
- 20,000 MT Variable Deck Load
- Enhanced single activity with offline stand-building
- Four HP pumps 7,500psi
- 15,500 bbls liquid mud storage
- Increased thruster capacity and hull-strengthening to expand operating envelope
- Outfitted with multipurpose lowering cart for X-tree hang off
- Construction completed in 2011

Plasterk gives details on dispute regulation talks

THREE aspects of the dispute regulation (geschillenregling) were a source of discussion at last week's Kingdom Conference: the type of organisation that would execute the regulation, the nature of the disputes that would be resorting under the regulation, and the binding character of the ruling.

Dutch Minister of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations Ronald Plasterk provided details on the discussions between the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten at the June 16 Kingdom Conference in Curaçao in a letter that he sent to the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament on Tuesday.

Plasterk explained that the Dutch delegation indicated a preference for the Council of State of the Kingdom, and to give this existing entity a major role in the dispute regulation because, according to the Netherlands, this entity was "by far" best equipped to deal with disputes of a constitutional character.

However, the three Dutch Caribbean countries preferred to appoint the Supreme Court as the executive body of the dispute regulation. "The Supreme Court does not come into consideration. The Supreme Court is in charge of cassation jurisdiction in criminal, civil and fiscal cases, and has no task regarding legislation and administrations of the Caribbean countries," stated Plasterk.

And, the third option namely to establish a new independent body raises new questions about the composition, range and position in relation to the existing Kingdom entities.

Plasterk explained that talks at the Kingdom Conference regarding the nature of the disputes that required solving showed that the (Dutch Caribbean) countries focused on discussions regarding national redress and the authority of the Kingdom (Government). According to the minister, it was difficult to differentiate between strictly legal and administrative (governmental) interpretations.

Also a point of discussion was whether the ruling of the body in charge of the dispute regulation would be binding or not. Plasterk said that the Dutch delegation wanted to "prevent" that an entity in charge of the dispute regulation would be established which take decisions with broad administrative consequences which are currently could part of the authority of the Kingdom Government.

With no solution in sight for the near future on this lasting issue Plasterk stated, that the Netherlands proposed at the Kingdom Conference to look for a temporary provision.

Through this provision, countries would be able to seek advice from the Council of State for the Kingdom in the decision-taking process of the Kingdom Council of Ministers. The decision would then be temporarily postponed and only resumed after the Council of State had judged on the matter.

The judgment would be authoritative and the Kingdom Council of Ministers could only deviate from that judgment if it had a good motivation. The advice of the Council of State would be made public.

This provision could be established for a limited number of years until a definite solution had been found through a Kingdom Law securing the execution of the dispute regulation. The temporary provision could also serve to gain experience for a more definite format of solving disputes between the Kingdom partners.

"Through this provision, all disputes on issues between the Kingdom and the countries could be decided on based on a judgment of the Council of State for the Kingdom. This provision goes further than, as was proposed by the Inter-Parliamentary Kingdom Consultations IPKO, to resolve strictly legal disputes based on the Charter and makes a complete review possible on every issue in which a country

feels
dis-
ad-

vantaged," stated Plasterk.

The Minister remarked that the Dutch Caribbean countries weren't positive about this solution, also not as a temporary provision. Talks will continue in three months at a follow-up meeting of the four governments.

Plasterk's update on the issue of the dispute regulation followed a request of the Second Chamber's Permanent Committee for Kingdom Relations dated June 18 to provide further information on this matter and to clarify why no agreement was reached at the Kingdom Conference. The request was an initiative of Member of Parliament (MP) Wassila Hachchi of the Democratic Party D66.

In his letter, Plasterk also addressed the matter of establishing a Kingdom Law Integrity of Government. MP Roelof van Laar of the Labor Party PvdA had asked the Minister to check with the other countries in the

Kingdom whether they would be in favor of regulating integrity of the governments through

a Kingdom Law with the possibility to establish a Kingdom Integrity Chamber.

According to Plasterk, the matter was explicitly discussed at the Kingdom Conference. He stated that the three Dutch Caribbean countries were not keen on establishing legislation on a Kingdom level to deal with integrity issues. The three countries contended that they already had national legislation in place to address this matter.

The St. Maarten delegation, led by Prime Minister Marcel Gumbs stated that aside from national legislation, the country was also in the process of setting up an Integrity Chamber. Curaçao remarked that it was implementing the recommendations of the assessment by Transparency International.



New referendum for RIU employees



AFTER an unfortunate sabotage in their previous referendum, the FTA Union has requested for a new referendum for the Housekeeping staff at the RIU Palace of Aruba. Meanwhile, a collective agreement has been negotiated for other departments of the hotel.

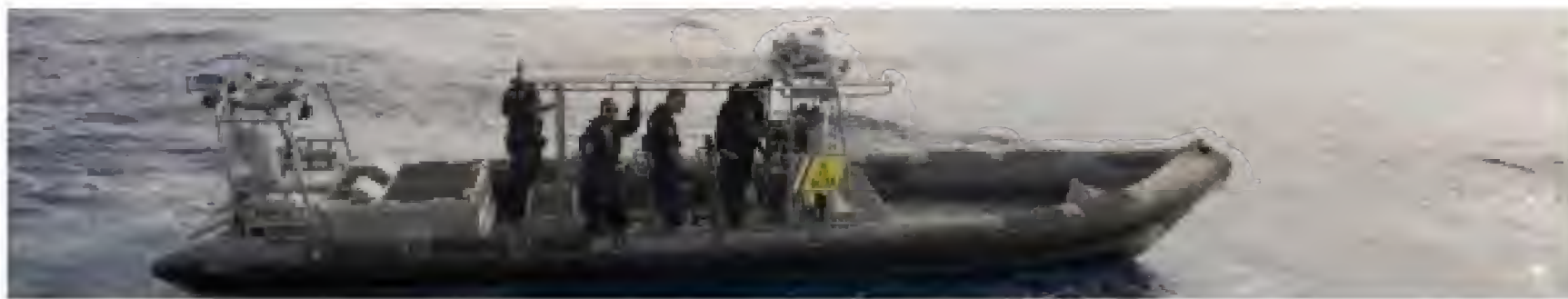
Hubert Dirksz, Director of FTA, has announced that there will be a referendum for the Housekeeping Department and preliminary steps have already been taken to process it. "We are now evaluating if we will still submit an application for a new referendum to the Mediator this week", stated Dirksz.

"On which terms the employees will vote, is not clear yet. We have submitted the protocol to the lawyers of RIU, but have received no response yet." Dirksz shared. An anonymous employee has shared that there is a "culture of fear" that reigns within the company, and abuse amongst the weaker staff positions that are prevalent especially in the Housekeeping department. "The working conditions in the department have not changed", said Dirksz.

He further added: "Renovation in the hotel is not finished yet, but next week all housekeeping maids must still return to work. After July 13th, we will exert more pressure." According to the Union President, RIU Palace will reopen its doors on July 13th.

FTA will be meeting tomorrow with the employees of the Bar and Maintenance Departments to develop a proposal for a collective labor agreement (CAO). The respective departments voted fairly for the representation of a union, with no bribery involved in the matter.

Dutch Caribbean Coastguard



THE Dutch Caribbean Coastguard (DCCG) is responsible for the safety in the waters around Aruba, Curacao, Saint Martin and the Dutch Caribbean islands (Bonaire, Saint Eustatius and Saba). In order to carry out its duties, the coastguard has several boats and aircraft.

SAFETY IN THE CARIBBEAN

Their position close to the coast of South America makes the islands vulnerable to, among other things, illegal transit of drugs to Europe. It is the Dutch Caribbean Coastguard's duty to combat drug and firearm

trafficking, illegal immigration, illegal fishing and pollution of the environment. To this end, the coastguard cooperates with other parties, including the police force, the Customs and volunteer rescue organizations. Another task is providing assistance in emergency situations. DCCG Headquarters is based at Parera naval base in Curacao.

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

In 2014 the Dutch Caribbean Coastguard confiscated approximately 1,000 kilos of cocaine, 7.5 kilos of

heroin and almost 69 kilos of marijuana. The figures in 2013 were: 2,100 kilos of cocaine, 3 kilos of heroin and 86 kilos of marijuana. In order to spread the risk, criminals more often smuggle drugs in small quantities. A big catch immediately influences the figures, which explains the fluctuations in the annual figures. Moreover, the Dutch Caribbean Coastguard intercepted four firearms in 2014 and arrested five illegal immigrants. In 2013 two firearms were intercepted and 43 illegal immigrants were arrested. The coastguard came into action in 200 emergency cases, rescuing 49 people. Annual Plan 2015 The annual plan 2015 contains the proposed priorities and major concerns. In 2015 these include: Tracking down the smuggling of drugs and firearms, as well as human trafficking; Assistance in case of emergency; Combating illegal fishery in the territorial waters of the islands; examination of the options to carry out aerial reconnaissance by means of unmanned aerial vehicles.

A little faith
will take you
to heaven,
Full faith will
bring heaven
to you

Journey of a Sathguru

Brahmrishi Shri Guruvanandji Swamy's (Shri Gurudev) spiritual journey began in his infancy under miraculous circumstances. Yogiraj Devraha Baba, one of the most esteemed saints of recent times, brought Shri Gurudev to his ashram to save his life from a terminal illness. Devraha Baba predicted that the young child one day would achieve the pinnacle of spirituality and he will use that divine energy to serve humanity.

Yogiraj's predictions have come true. Shri Gurudev has invoked all the Chakras (spiritual power centres) of his Kundalini (primal energy) and with 45 years of spiritual discipline (Sadhana) he has acquired all the Siddhis, the perfected spiritual powers of the ancient Vedic Sages.

Shri Gurudev is using the enormous divine energy that he has acquired, to help those in distress and to uplift the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the globe. He has travelled to over 172 countries to enrich people with the art of living a moral and spiritual life. Shri Gurudev's mission is to guide us to liberation from the cycle of birth and death while we fulfill our worldly duties.

Shri Gurudev holds numerous degrees including M.Tech. from IIT, PhD in Astrology and Masters in Sanskrit, Vedas, and Literature. He has participated in several international religious conferences, including the "All Religion World Conferences" where he has been honored with the "Best Personality" gold medal seven times.

Join Us For A Sacred Audience
With The Sathguru Whose
Blessings Can Change Both The
Direction And Destiny Of Your
Life.

Saturday, June 27th 2015
Blessings by Gurudev
7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Free Admission
Language: Hindi

Holiday INN
Las Palmas Ballroom
Palm Beach
Noord, Aruba

Sunday, June 28th 2015
Blessings by Gurudev
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Free Admission
Language: Hindi & English

Alhambra Mall
Alhambra Ballroom
J.E. Irausquin, Boulevard 47,
Oranjestad-Aruba

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Om
Journey Of
Your Soul
with The Divine Guru
Brahmrishi Shri Guruvanandji Swamy



Brahmrishi Shri Guruvanandji Swamy (Shri Gurudev)

Nearly EUR 4 million confiscated in big-money laundering investigation



DURING a search in houses and business premises in Aruba, the authorities have found and confiscated about EUR 2.8 million in a money laundering investigation. The money was found hidden in packages of chicken meat in a cooler. Last Tuesday, three suspects were arrested. One of them was arrested by the petition of the Dutch Justice. The three are suspected of money laundering. The money was received by them or others, managed, changed and placed in secret locations.

Upon the petition of the Public Ministry of Aruba and Holland, the investigations started on April 13th 2015. Dutch Polis searched 3 houses and 3 businesses in Holland and Belgium. There a total of EUR 700.000, two computers and all the administrative work were confiscated. At the same time in Aruba, 4 houses and 4 businesses were searched where EUR 440.000 were confiscated. Polis also confiscated 3 Rolex watches, 3 valuable cars and two motorcycles. The detained are suspects of money laundering. They remain in jail for further investigations.

PARLIAMENT WANTS ISLANDS TO IMPROVE LGBT RIGHTS



THE Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament on Tuesday adopted a motion which called on the Dutch Government to urge the Governments of Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten to legalize same sex marriages and to improve the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBTs).

The Parliament approved the motion of the liberal democratic VVD party, the Labor Party PvdA and the Democratic Party D66. Aside from the VVD, PvdA and D66, the motion was supported by, among others, the Christian Democratic Party CDA, the green left party Groen Links, the Socialist Party SP and the Party for Animals PvdD. Several independent members also voted in favor.

The motion was presented on June 16, 2015, during a meeting of the Permanent Committee for Foreign Relations with Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bert Koenders about gay rights throughout the world on the initiative of Member of the Second Chamber Sjoerd Sjoerdsma of the Democratic D66 Party who had written a paper on this topic.

During that debate, Member of Parliament Han ten Broeke (VVD) submitted a motion calling on the Dutch Government to facilitate the legalization and acceptance of same sex marriages in Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten. The motion was co-signed by Pia Dijkstra (D66) and Michiel Servaes (PvdA).

According to the motion, the governments of the three

Dutch Caribbean countries were doing too little to secure the rights of LGBTs. Same sex marriages are not possible in Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten. This is in contrast to the Netherlands and by extension the Dutch public entities Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. The VVD, PvdA and D66 stressed that LGBTs should be able to live in freedom and security throughout the Kingdom, and asked the Dutch Government to urge the island governments to legalize same sex marriages and to improve the position of LGBTs. In the motion, the three parties pointed out that the Netherlands has a responsibility to remind other partners in the Kingdom of the importance of human rights.

Ten Broeke questioned why the law on the islands stated that a marriage could only be a connection between a man and woman. He remarked that the Curaçao Government boycotted the first Gay Pride a year and a half, and that the St. Maarten Government rejected the call by The Hague to make sexual diversity part of the school curriculum.

Ten Broeke said that there were people on the islands who lost their job or home when the boss or the landlord found out that they were not heterosexual. "Let alone that this group can claim partner rights or adopt a child," he said.



Bert Koenders Venezuela Is Not a Threat, But a Risk



VENEZUELA is no threat to the former Netherlands Antilles, but it is a risk. This is according to Minister Bert Koenders of Foreign Affairs, last Thursday after the debate on the tensions in the South American country.

"The economic situation is very bad, even the political tensions are great," he said. That is why the Netherlands should consider the deteriorating situation in Venezuela and any risk to the islands of the former Netherlands Antilles.

He was reacting to criticism voiced by the Dutch political parties VVD, SP, D66 and CDA. They feel that the government is naive and in their eyes barely acting on the

explosive situation.

But according to Koenders there are all kinds of consultations on the situation in Venezuela, with the country itself, with Cuba, the United States and the European Union.

In Venezuela there are major economic and political problems. Poverty is increasing, as well as crime and insecurity, Koenders said in the debate. The land is near the Leeward Islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao.

Dutch Navy must keep an eye on Venezuelan Refugees

THE Dutch Navy must play a role in keeping an eye on Venezuelan refugees trying to enter the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. This is according to the Dutch Parliament that is calling upon the Dutch government to insist on the governments of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao to keep an eye on the illegal migration from Venezuela. The Coast Guard Caribbean, the section of Defense, which is now in the region battling arms smuggling, drug trafficking and illegal fishing, could play a role in this. A majority of the House of Representatives supports a proposal from the ruling party VVD to that effect.

Especially the VVD, PVV, CDA and D66 believe that the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bert Koenders is following a weak policy towards Venezuela. Especially the 'good bilateral relations' with which Koenders deals with the South American country and supposedly excellent cooperation against human trafficking and drug smuggling, irritates the House.

According to the MPs, Koenders does not give value to the language of war of President Nicolas Maduro. "The minister says that it will not get that far," said CDA MP Knops. "But I do not want us to be surprised." Knops want the Netherlands to send more troops to the area.

VVD MP Ten Broeke asked Koenders recently to tighten the travel advice for Venezuela. "No need," was the answer. Less than two weeks later Foreign Affairs



adapted the advice, because of the increasing number of kidnappings of tourists. The Netherlands and the former Netherlands Antilles islands should develop scenarios for threats from Venezuela for the safety and tourism on the Leeward Islands, Sjoerdsma MP for D66 believes.

Venezuela is in crisis since the free fall of the oil price. According to Sjoerdsma the country is actually run by a drug cartel, with a socialist demagogue, Maduro, at the head.

General Accounting Office received Annual Report 2014 from Minister Bermudez



ON Wednesday morning, Minister of Finance Angel Bermudez, handed over the 2014 Annual Report to Frederick Nieuwboer, Ling Wong, and Roland de Cuba; members of the General Accounting Office of Aruba.

"We are a few weeks delayed, however; the General Accounting Office assured us that they will finish the investigation of this Annual Report and turn it over to Parliament before the 1st of September," said Bermudez.

The President of the General Accounting Office also expressed during a meeting with Mr. Bermudez that they are confident they will finish the investigation at the end of August.

In the meanwhile, the Parliament of Aruba will soon be in recess, but the Minister indicates that this will not affect the completion of this investigation.

"There are some pending concepts of law that are a matter of urgency because they are tied to a date, like the raise of percentage of BAZV and the reduction of insurance premium of AVZ that are scheduled to enter into force by July 1st, however; it is not urgent for the Annual Report to be discussed now. This can be done in the first week of September when the General Accounting Office hands this over to the Parliament," stated Mr. Bermudez.



19th Anniversary Celebration of Monuments Foundation Aruba

LAST Thursday, Minister Otmar Oduber had the honor to be present at the 19th anniversary celebration of Monuments Foundation Aruba (SMFA). The Minister indicated that this institute was immensely necessary and even though the foundation started off with many difficulties, during the last 5 years we can see great advances that are being accomplished thanks to the Monuments Foundation Aruba. There are four organizations in Aruba that deal with everything that involves restoration, protection, maintenance and awareness of Aruban monuments. The main objective of the SMFA is to preserve Aruban Monuments.

As the Minister of Culture, Mr. Oduber has been working very closely with SMFA for the last two years.

"A monumental building has no significance if you do not know the history behind it, if you do not understand why it is standing there, it will simply be just a building of cement and blocks with no value attached to it," expressed Mr. Oduber.

The Minister continued to say: "I believe that the SMFA has even gone a step further in their efforts to help restore and advice. Together with UNOCA and Monument Bureau they took the challenge to educate the community on the importance of our monuments, our cultural heritage."

Many of the monumental buildings are getting attention or will get the appropriate attention of SMFA. Among some are the City Hall, General Accounting Office, Lighthouse, Nicolas Store, Uncle Louis Store and others that are in the process to be acquired like the Papiamento Restaurant in Wilhelminastraat.

As a valuable addition to the celebration of the 19th anniversary of SMFA is the advice that the Minister together with the Minister of Culture of Holland requested of Holland for our Monument Council to have a more prominent role in the community to ensure that private monuments (those that do not belong to the Government) would also be added to the list to be restored and protected.

"With the changes in the management of monuments in Aruba, private buildings will also be protected and registered to be preserved. These monuments are part of our history and our culture," the Minister concluded saying.



ONE DEAD ONE WANTED

RICHARD Matt, one of two escaped murderers from an upstate New York maximum-security prison, was shot and killed by officers involved in a massive three-week manhunt. Gov. Officers are still pursuing fugitive David Sweat but there was nothing to confirm his location as of last night. Still, "several leads" were being pursued on his whereabouts, the governor said.

The search involving about 1,100 officers has transformed life in sleepy hamlets and towns shadowed by the Adirondack Mountains.

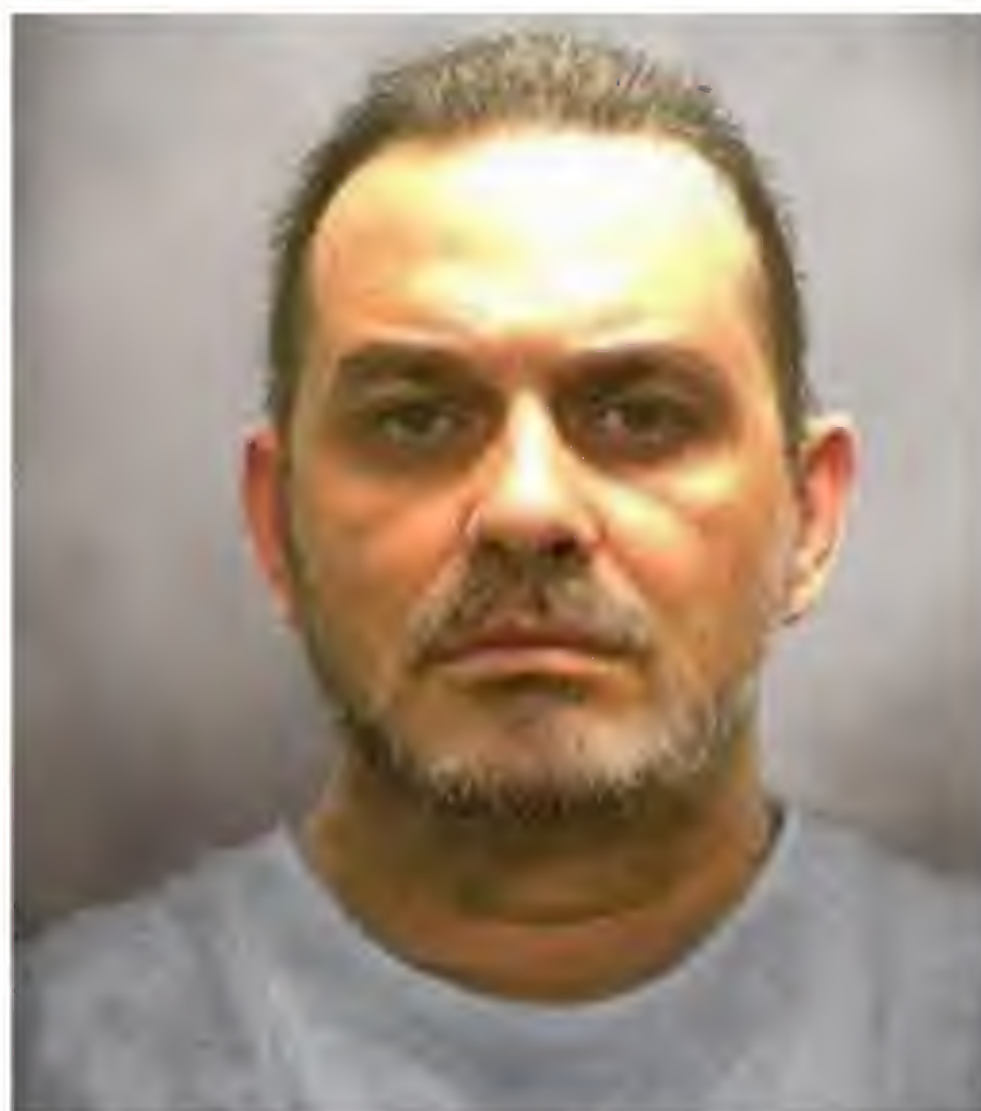
For three tense weeks, residents have coped with incessant rumors, constant roadblocks, the buzz of helicopters, state troopers in the schools and homes under lockdown as authorities have pursued more than 2,000 tips into the escapees' whereabouts.

Law enforcement finally closed in on Matt on Friday around 1:30 p.m. when police received a call of shots fired near Route 30 in the vicinity of Malone, New York, according to law enforcement officials briefed on the matter. About 20 minutes later, more gunshots were heard.

The driver of a recreational vehicle called 911 when he heard the initial shots. He kept driving and called 911 a second time when he realized his camper was hit, officials said.

Investigators traced the site of the initial gunshots to about eight miles back from where the driver stopped and discovered the bullet hole in the back of his camper. Officers came upon a cabin where they smelled gunpowder, as if a weapon recently had been fired, New York State Police Superintendent Joseph D'Amico said.

D'Amico said federal officers searching the area heard coughs in the woods. Moments later, Matt -- armed



with a 20-gauge shotgun; was confronted and fatally shot by a Border Patrol tactical team.

D'Amico said Matt, who turned 49 on Thursday, was shot after failing to comply with verbal commands to put his hands up.

"You never want to see anyone lose their life," "But I would remind people that Mr. Matt was an escaped murderer from a state prison. Mr. Matt killed two people who we know about. Mr. Matt killed his boss in a dispute and dismembered him. He fled to Mexico and then he killed another person in Mexico and was imprisoned in Mexico."

Two sets of footprints were found in the area, the law enforcement officials said. The second set is believed to belong to Sweat.

"We have no actual sighting of Sweat by law enforcement," "But we have no indication that Sweat wasn't accompanying Matt at the time that he was shot and

killed."

The search for Sweat was unfolding around Elephant Head, northwest of Lake Titus and about 10 miles from Malone, according to Clinton County Sheriff David Favro.

At a command center near the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York, law enforcement helicopters were taking off to join the search. As nightfall approached, authorities moved floodlights into the area.

"This is definitely the hardest perimeter that I've seen around any area since this manhunt started," Favro said.

Matt's shooting occurred on a day the New York State Police reported that Matt and Sweat might have been headed to Canada. The area where Matt was killed is about 70 miles from Canada.

A reported burglary led police to a cabin on Thursday in Malone. Malone is about 14 miles northwest of Mountain View, where another cabin was burglarized.

Evidence found in the Malone cabin was being tested, Duffy added. At the time, the fugitives had not been seen, but officers were "certain that the evidence is conclusive," State Police Maj. Charles Guess said Friday at a news conference.

Two prison employees have been charged in connection with the men's elaborate June 6 breakout, and the accusations against them highlight a series of apparent security lapses.

Matt and Sweat, are both convicted murderers.

Matt was accused of killing a man after a dispute over money, snapping his victim's neck and then dismembering the body.

Sweat is serving a life sentence for the killing of a sheriff's deputy in 2002.

Sweat and another man robbed a gun store and fatally shot the deputy after he confronted them.



TRIPLE TERROR ATTACKS:

Bombing in Tunisian Riu Hotel, Attack in French Factory, and Bombing in Kuwait Mosque

GUNMEN killed at least 27 people at a beachfront Tunisian hotel on Friday, the same day a terrorist lashed out brutally in France and a mosque in Kuwait was bombed.

Tunisia's interior minister reported the casualties from the attack the Hotel Riu Imperial Marhaba in Sousse, according to the state-run TAP news agency. At least one gunman has also reportedly been killed.

A woman from Wales said that she saw bloodied bodies lying in the sand and people from neighboring hotels jumping over to fences to get to her hotel. She said she is staying about a mile from the main attack scene, but visitors there still took precautions by putting mattresses up against the door to slow any gunmen who might try to barge in.

The hotel guest said she heard at least 30 seconds of sustained gunfire, though things have become relatively quiet by early afternoon.

On its website, Hotel Riu Imperial Marhaba is described as an all-inclusive hotel with views of Port El Kantaoui. It contains indoor and outdoor pools, including one for children, as well as buffet-style and theme restaurants.

Attacks in France, Kuwait

The bloodshed comes the same day as at least two deadly terrorist attack in other countries.

One person was beheaded and two injured at a gas factory near Lyon in south-eastern France, according to French President Francois Hollande. And ISIS has claimed responsibility for an apparent bomb blast at the Shiite-affiliated Al-Sadiq mosque in Kuwait's capital during Friday prayers, leading to a number of death and injuries.

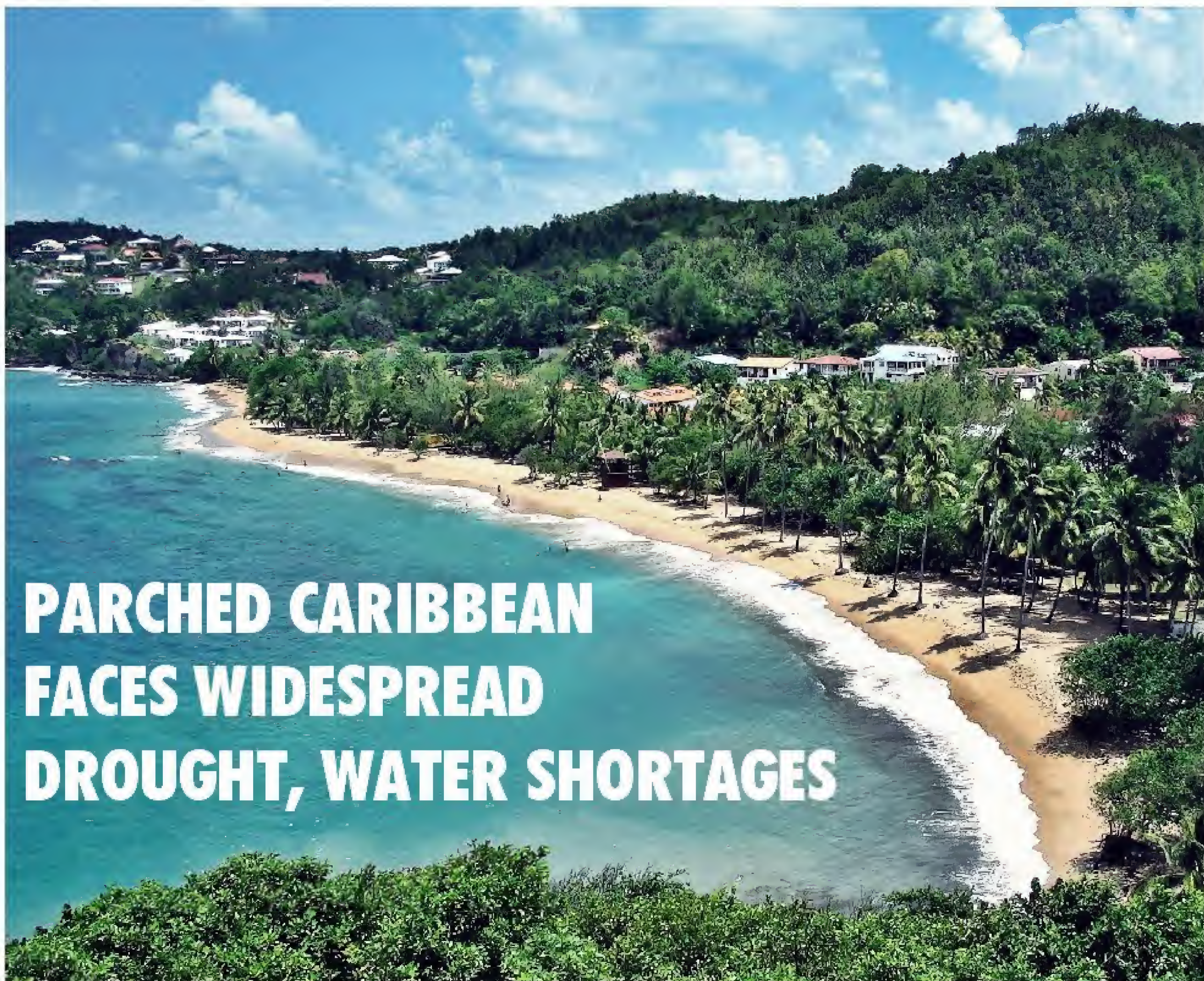
Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Spring, saw a relatively peaceful political transition, but this year the North African nation has been the target of two mass-casualty terror attacks on popular tourist destinations.



In March, at least 23 people died when gunmen stormed the landmark Bardo Museum in Tunis. In a subsequent audio

statement, ISIS identified two men -- Abu Zakariya al-Tunisi and Abu Anas al-Tunisi -- who it said used "automatic

weapons and hand grenades" to kill and injure what it called "crusaders and apostates."



PARCHED CARIBBEAN FACES WIDESPREAD DROUGHT, WATER SHORTAGES

THE worst drought in five years is creeping across the Caribbean, prompting officials around the region to brace for a bone dry summer.

From Puerto Rico to Cuba to the eastern Caribbean island of St. Lucia, crops are withering, reservoirs are drying up and cattle are dying while forecasters worry that the situation could only grow worse in the coming months.

Thanks to El Nino, a warming of the tropical Pacific that affects global weather, forecasters expect the hurricane season that began in June to be quieter than normal, with a shorter period of rains. Puerto Rico is among the Caribbean islands worst hit by the water shortage, with more than 1.5 million people affected by the drought so far, the U.S. Na-

tional Drought Mitigation Center says. The amount of water flowing into 12 of at least 22 rivers that supply the island's reservoirs is at an all-time historic low, the Department of Natural Resources reported Wednesday.

Tens of thousands of people receive water only every third day under strict rationing recently imposed by the island government. Puerto Rico last week also activated National Guard troops to help distribute water and approved a resolution to impose fines on people and businesses for improper water use.

The Caribbean's last severe drought was in 2010. The current one could grow worse if the hurricane season ending in November produces scant rainfall and the region enters the dry season with parched reservoirs, said Cedric

Van Meerbeeck, climatologist with the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology.

"We might have serious water shortages ... for irrigation of crops, firefighting, domestic consumption or consumption by the hotel sector," he said.

The Caribbean isn't the only area in the Western Hemisphere dealing with extreme water shortages. Brazil has been struggling with its own severe drought that has drained reservoirs serving the metropolis of Sao Paulo.

In the Caribbean, the farm sector has lost more than \$1 million in crops as well as tens of thousands of dollars in livestock, said Norman Gibson, scientific officer at the Trinidad-based Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute.

On St. Lucia, which has been especially hard hit, farmers say crops including coconuts, cashews and oranges are withering.

Officials in Cuba say 75 percent of the island is enduring a drought that has killed cattle and destroyed thousands of hectares (acres) of crops including plantains, citrus, rice and beans. Recent heavy rains in some areas have alleviated the problem some, but all 200 government-run reservoirs are far below capacity.

In the nearby Dominican Republic, water shortages have been reported in hundreds of communities, said Martin Melendez, a civil engineer and hydrology expert who has worked as a government consultant. "We were 30 days away from the entire water system collapsing," he said.

Norwegian Air to launch Northeast flights to French Caribbean

TWO years ago, Norwegian Air Shuttle brought a low-cost business model to the U.S. with cheap flights between the U.S. and Europe, provoking rival carriers and airline employees on both sides of the Atlantic. Now Norwegian will begin flying directly to the Caribbean from Baltimore, Boston, and New York under an Open Skies agreement between the United States and the European Union and Norway, expanding its cut-rate business right in the backyard of the U.S. airline industry.

Norwegian said today it will launch winter flights on Boeing 737s from the three cities to Guadeloupe and Martinique on Dec. 3, with fares starting at \$79 from the U.S. The New York flights, from JFK International

Airport, will operate three times a week; the other flights, twice weekly.

The carrier hopes to profit during the low season for European leisure travel, when it typically parks about 10 of the jets, Norwegian's chief executive officer, Bjørn Kjos, said in an interview at the company's New York office. If he can make money on the routes, Kjos said, he may expand service in the Caribbean the following winter.

The Norwegian flights could open a fresh round of tussling between the carrier and U.S. airlines and unions, which have lobbied heavily against Norwegian's application at the U.S. Department of Transportation for a foreign air carrier permit. Norwegian is seeking the permit for an Irish

subsidiary it would like to use to expand its low-cost, long-haul operations.

Opponents argue that with its long-haul business model, Norwegian Air threatens U.S. aviation jobs and trans-Atlantic flights by hiring crews in nations that have lower wages and less stringent regulatory rules than Scandinavia. The company said the Caribbean flights will be staffed by European crews.

"We can fly wherever we like with the Open Skies agreement," Norwegian's Kjos said, arguing that flying to the

French territories is the same as flying to France. «It should be Open Skies all over the world.»

Kjos said the flights are a small operation unlikely to draw a backlash from competitors, given the service currently offered to Martinique and Guadeloupe from the U.S. "I don't see it," said Kjos, an attorney and former fighter jet pilot. "These islands aren't being served."

Air France-KLM offers winter service to the two destinations from Miami, with stops in Haiti. American Airlines flies those routes from Miami year-round.

Kjos noted that Norwegian already has a U.S. presence in its service to Europe on Boeing 787s. The airline is planning new flights this year to Europe from Las Vegas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Kjos said Boston is also a city from which Norwegian might begin trans-Atlantic service.

"We said, 'How can we utilize the fleet in other areas?' If I don't believe I can earn a profit, then I don't fly them," Kjos said. Airlines venturing this far afield generally connect the flights to their home networks.



Same-Sex Marriage Legal Nationwide, Supreme Court Rules

THE U.S. Supreme Court on Friday made marriage for same-sex couples legal nationwide, declaring that refusing to grant marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples violates the Constitution.

The landmark ruling will produce the most significant change in laws governing matrimony since the court struck down state bans on inter-racial marriage almost 50 years ago. The majority opinion in the 5-4

decision was written by Justice Anthony Kennedy.

«The constitution promises liberty to all within its reach,» Kennedy wrote.

A total of 36 states now permit gay couples to get married, covering roughly 70 percent of the U.S. population. Today's ruling means the bans must end in the other 14 states -- Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota,

Tennessee and Texas.

The decision capped a remarkably quick turnaround in public and judicial acceptance of same-sex marriage. In the past 18 months, court rulings struck down marriage bans in rapid succession -- nearly 60 separate decisions in more than half the states.

Today's ruling overturned a decision from the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, which said states had legitimate reasons for maintaining the



traditional definition of marriage. The appeals court also said it would be better «to allow change through the customary political processes» instead of the courts.

Public opinion has shifted dra-

matically in recent years. The first Gallup poll on the subject showed only 27 percent approval for same-sex marriage in 1996. Gallup's most recent poll, taken last month, showed 60 percent approval.

NEW SELF-HEALING PLASTIC COULD MAKE CRACKED PHONES A THING OF THE PAST



MANY of us know all too well the frustration that comes of buying a shiny new gadget, only to see it smashed into a thousand pieces soon after.

But a new family of plastics offer insurance against these disasters, through unique properties that allow them to be reformed after being broken apart.

Just add heat and a chemical catalyst, and watch the damage melt away.

Vitrimers are the brainchild of Ludwik Liebler, a materials scientist at the ESCP Institute in Paris, the school made famous by Marie Curie's discovery of radioactivity.

Liebler's work has earned him the 2015 Inventor Award in the research category from the EPO (European Patent Office), and is expected to have a wide-ranging and transformative impact.

"We think that the first applications will be in transport, in cars, in planes, in all the applications you have that need toughness, for repair and increasing durability of your objects," says Liebler, who was inspired by the shape-shifting ways of the T-1000 in 'Terminator 2.' Vitrimers combine the two existing families of plastics. Thermoplastics are malleable when heated but become fixed in a solid shape when cooled, and cannot be reformed. Thermosets are rigid and retain their form even when heated. Vitrimers retain their form when heated, but can be reconstituted infinite times.

"The vitrimers can have both of the two worlds, but they are fundamentally different," says Liebler.

"They combine this permanent network, resistance, dimensional stability with the possibility of being malleable, (and) completely recyclable."

The scientist describes the field as a "young family" with almost limitless applications, which could come to render the existing plastics obsolete.

One intriguing possibility is the use of vitrimers to treat injuries and accelerate healing.

"It seems to work, at least in animals," claims Liebler. "We made this experience with gluing liver, which you can buy, and then we made experiments with colleagues in the hospital on liver in rats and it works, and we had a surgery on pigs and it works."

But the priority is to set the new technology loose in manufacturing and create a new generation of products. With research ongoing, it is not clear when these will hit the shelves, but in time users will be able to either heat their devices back to health, or healing will occur automatically.

The field of self-healing is teeming with possibilities. From fellow EPO nominee Hendrik Marius Jonkers' concept for regenerating concrete, to the University of Illinois' 'blood clots,' and airplane wings that repair themselves, materials are being given a second chance.

Until then, keep your phone where you can see it.

'Saved by the Bell' star Dustin Diamond sentenced to 4 months in jail for stabbing

FORMER child star Dustin Diamond was sentenced to four months in jail Thursday for stabbing a man during a Christmas Day bar fight in Wisconsin.

Diamond, 38, who played the nerdy "Screech" in the 1990s sitcom "Saved by the Bell," apologized for his actions on "a night that centers around celebrating peace and love."

"I want it to be clear that this situation will be not repeated again," he told the court, calling the fight the "single most terrifying experience of my entire life."

But Judge Paul Malloy sentenced him to 120 days in jail and ordered him to pay more than \$1,000 in restitution to "send a message to the community that we're just not going to live like this."

A jury last month found the actor not guilty of a felony count but

convicted him on two misdemeanor charges in connection with the brawl, according to court documents.

The Wisconsin jury determined that Diamond did not recklessly endanger safety, but he carried a concealed weapon and behaved in a disorderly manner.

The altercation occurred at the Grand Avenue Saloon in Port Washington.

Diamond and his girlfriend, Amanda Schutz were inside the bar when a group of intoxicated people started behaving in a rude and insulting manner, leading him to believe "there was going to be a brawl," he said, according to the arrest report at the time.

He said he turned to close his account and get their coats, but when he looked back, his girlfriend was bleeding and two men were holding her hair, the report said.

Diamond said he moved toward his girlfriend when a man grabbed him, the report said. Diamond said he might have stabbed the man with a pen used to sign a credit card receipt but later conceded he was armed with the knife, the report said.

"Diamond stated that he did not intentionally stab the individual in the bar but that chaos broke out and people were grabbing at him and that he swung his arms to break free," the report stated.

The man identified as the stabbing victim told police he didn't see a knife or initially feel being cut. Police said the wound was not life-threatening.

Diamond appeared on "Saved by the Bell" as awkward nerd Samuel "Screech" Powers from 1989 to 1993, and later appeared in spinoffs of the hit show.



CONSUMING PROTEIN AND VEGETABLES FIRST MAY INFLUENCE BLOOD SUGAR FOR DIABETICS

OVERWEIGHT and obese people with type 2 diabetes may feel better after a meal if they start it off with vegetables or proteins and end with the carbs, suggests a new study of 11 people.

Finishing the broccoli and chicken before tucking into bread and fruit juice was tied to a lower rise in blood sugar levels over the next two hours, compared to eating the same foods in the opposite order, researchers report in *Diabetes Care*.

"When we saw the result, we were really encouraged that this is something that could potentially benefit people," said Dr. Louis Aronne, the study's senior author from Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes and is often linked to obesity. In type 2 diabetes, the body's cells are resistant to the hormone insulin, or the body doesn't make enough of it. Insulin helps the body's cells use glucose in the blood for fuel. Blood sugar normally rises after eating, but for people with diabetes it can spike dangerously. Diabetics are often told to avoid foods high on the glycemic index - a measure of how rapidly a food gets converted to glucose in the blood - like white breads and sugary drinks.

The new research suggests that people may benefit from timing their consumption of carbohydrates during a meal instead of simply avoiding certain foods. The researchers recruited 11 people with type 2 diabetes who were all overweight or obese. They were also taking a drug called metformin, which helps to control blood sugar.

The participants all fasted for 12 hours overnight before consuming a 628-calorie meal with protein, carbohydrates and fat.

One week, they consumed the carbohydrates (ciabatta bread and orange juice) first. Then they ate skinless grilled chicken, a small salad and buttered steamed broccoli 15 minutes later.

The participants ate the same meal a week later, but the order of the foods was reversed, with the salad and broccoli first, then the chicken, then the carbs.

The researchers also took blood samples before the meals and 30, 60 and 120 minutes afterward.

When the participants ate vegetables and proteins first, their blood sugar levels were about 29 percent lower 30 minutes after starting the meal, compared to when they ate the carbs first. At 60 and 120 minutes after participants began eating, blood sugar levels were 37 percent and 17 percent lower, respectively, compared to when the carbs came first. "It's possible what this is doing is delaying or tempering how fast the carbohydrates get absorbed," said Dr. Sethu Reddy, chief of the Adult Diabetes Section at the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston.

"I think certainly it's an interesting study that says eating a good salad before your meal may help with glucose absorption," said

Reddy, who was not involved with the new study.

The new study may not be the full story, Reddy told Reuters Health. For example, he said, it will be important to see what happens beyond two hours, and what's happening to the carbohydrates. The researchers also say more studies with longer follow-up times are needed. "We're doing the next study, a longer study," said Aronne.

As of now, he said, the theory is that the absorption of the carbohydrates is somehow slowed down by eating vegetables, which are low on the glycemic index. "This shows that the highly desired foods can be a part of a diet if we sneak them in there," Aronne said.



PROFESSIONAL DUTCH FOOTBALLOER

Nigel de Jong signs new three-year contract at AC Milan

NIGEL de Jong has put pen to paper on a new three-year-deal at AC Milan.

The defensive midfielder, who has made 81 appearances for the Netherlands, signed for AC Milan from Manchester City in 2012.

De Jong, 30, has been the subject of constant speculation regarding a return to the Premier League with Manchester United among those reported to be interested.

His current contract was due to expire at the end of June, with Schalke and Ajax also said to be considering a move for the Dutchman, but he has committed his future to the Italians until June 2018.



WIMBLEDON DRAW:

Andy Murray given tough route to final

ANDY Murray will take on Kazakhstan's Mikhail Kukushkin in the first round at Wimbledon – and the world No 3 has been drawn in the opposite half of the draw to top seed and defending champion Novak Djokovic.

But the bad news for Murray is that his route to the final is strewn with major challenges – he could have to get past Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, Rafa Nadal and Roger Federer before a potential meeting with Djokovic in the final.

And Murray might have hoped for an easier first round opponent than Kukushkin, 27, who is ranked 58 in the world. On his good days, he is very good – he took Nadal to four sets in the fourth round at Wimbledon last year – but arrives in poor form, having won just one of his last six matches.



The pair have met twice before, Murray winning both matches.

"He's a good player, he's had some big tournaments in the past," Murray said. "I think he played Rafa (Nadal) pretty close here last year – he can play well on the grass. He plays predominantly from the baseline but he's a good ball striker and if you give him time to dictate the points he's a tough guy to beat."

After that, big-serving Dutchman Robin Haase is a potential second round opponent, and Andreas Seppi – the experienced Italian who reached the Halle final last week and beat Federer at the Australian Open – could await in the third.

Novak Djokovic could hardly have had a worse first round draw. He will play the experienced and in-form German Philipp Kohlschreiber, who had two match points against Federer in Halle last week. Kohlschreiber is one of the finest grass court players around and at No 33 in the world rankings, only just missed out on being seeded himself.

Nadal, who is having a tough 2015, will face the Brazilian Thomaz Bellucci, the world No 41. Federer faces Bosnia's world No 81 Damir Dzumhur.

Satnam Singh Just Became the First Indian to Make It to the NBA

MAKING it big in basketball had long been a dearly held dream for Satnam Singh. Making it happen was another matter.

Growing up in a remote village in India's Punjab province, he was destined to become a farmer -- like his father and his father's father.

But that's the thing about dreams. With hard work -- and, in Singh's case, a ginormous frame -- they sometimes come true.

On Thursday, he became the first basketball player from India to be drafted by an NBA team.

The Dallas Mavericks selected the 7-foot-2-inch, 19-year-old with the 52nd pick in the draft. He's not expected to make the team right away, but rather will put in time at the Development League level.

But his arrival is a big moment for India.

For the moment, Singh is little known in his homeland, where cricket is by far the biggest sport and few follow the American National Basketball Association.

But success in the United States could change that -- in the same way China's Yao Ming galvanized interest in basketball in his country.

That's certainly what the Mavs are counting on.

"We certainly created a legend," owner Mark Cuban said. "There's a billion new Mavs fans out there right now."

SPOTTING POTENTIAL

The village of Billoke is a tiny one in the proud state of Punjab, home of turbaned Sikh men and Bhangra music.



towered over others by a full two feet.

It's a genetic trait that even Satnam Singh, even at a young age, was exhibiting.

An eagle-eyed sports enthusiast recognized the potential in his friend's 9-year-old son, who was already 5 feet 9 inches by then.

"I can make out from his height that he could become a good player," Rajinder Singh stated

in 2012. "I took him to the ground to practice. Day by day he excelled and touched greater heights."

COMING TO AMERICA

Soon after, he arrived in the United States to train at a basketball academy. He was separated from his parents by more than 8,000 miles, connected to them only through Skype. He missed home, he said. And he

missed the food.

But he had one dream, and knew that if he practiced hard and put his heart into it, it could be his.

"I wish to become the greatest player in the world," he said. "I want to uphold the honor of India, the USA and of my coach and make basketball a prominent sport in India."

Three years later, he's made the draft -- and made history.